Podcast Companion Workbook

Episode 46 -How Criticism Sabotages Affair Recovery

©CoreRelationshipRecovery, 2025 - W:HopeForUs.com – E:AskTheUnfaithful@Gmail.com

Welcome!

You've just listened to a revealing and honest episode on how criticism—especially self-criticism—erodes intimacy, blocks empathy, and fuels disconnection in recovery after betrayal.

This workbook is designed to help you slow down, reflect, and take action toward healthier communication with your partner—and with yourself. Whether you're stuck in self-condemnation or struggling to stay open in the face of your partner's pain, this guide will help you build new tools that foster empathy, presence, and truth.

How to Use This Workbook:

- Complete this workbook after listening to Episode 46.
- Journal your answers as truthfully as you can—without judging yourself for the answers.
- Revisit any section when you notice yourself shutting down, reacting, or withdrawing from your recovery.
- Let curiosity lead. This work isn't about punishment—it's about growth.

©CoreRelationshipRecovery, 2025 - W:HopeForUs.com

Section 1: Reflection Questions

1. When I feel criticized, what emotions show up in my body?

2. Do I tend to react, withdraw, collapse, or defend when I feel criticized?

3. What is the story I tell myself when my partner expresses pain?

4. How often do I confuse grief or fear with judgment or attack?

5. When I look honestly, how does my self-judgment impact my ability to stay present with my partner?

6. What's one way I can interrupt the "judgment loop" this week?

©CoreRelationshipRecovery, 2025 - W:HopeForUs.com

Section 2: Empowerment Language Shift

Rewrite the following Critical Thought Patterns:

(Example: Change "She/He is always 'right' " to "She's trying to feel safe. That's not 'having' to be right - it's trying to feel a sense of self assurance where hers/his confidence has been decimated")

- "He/She is never satisfied"

- "I can't do anything right"

- "She/He is just trying to control me"

- **" I'm too broken to fix this"**

©CoreRelationshipRecovery, 2025 - W:HopeForUs.com

Section 3: Action Challenges for the Week

Day 1

Pause when you feel judged. Ask yourself: “What else might be happening here?”

Day 2

Say something honest and validating to your partner—without defensiveness

Day 3

Write a letter to yourself from the point of view of someone who believes you can grow

Day 4

When your partner expresses pain, repeat this silently:
“This is about her pain, not my failure”

Day 5

Go one full day without self-criticism. Journal what that felt like

Day 6

Do one thing today that demonstrates emotional humility—not just remorse

Day 7

Practice saying: “You’re right. I didn’t handle that well. I want to try again.”

©CoreRelationshipRecovery, 2025 - W:HopeForUs.com

Section 4:

Healing Affirmations

I am not my worst moment

I can practice self-compassion over self condemnation

My growth is proven in my actions. not my apologies

I can stay present without defending or collapsing

Every moment I choose humility. I build trust

A Word of Encouragement:

Criticism, whether internal or external, is like emotional static – it drowns out empathy, safety, and connection.

But you're not stuck there.

This work? The reflection, the pausing, the trying again–it's not about performance. It's about integrity. And integrity grows one honest moment at a time.

You don't have to be perfect to be present.

You don't have to have it all figured out to show up.

You just have to be willing.

And you are.

Keep going.

©CoreRelationshipRecovery, 2025 - W:HopeForUs.com